

ARTGAZE

townsville's arts magazine

winter 2010



INCLUDING Art Guide for WINTER



XXX + WHY

1st May - 27th June

AN EXHIBITION OF WORK FEATURING
TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY PRINT PROCESS'S BY
DONNA FOLEY, JO LANKESTER, KELLY BIANCHI & DOUGLAS ARANA

Pinnacles Gallery Riverway Arts Centre

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note from the editor

I am pleased to introduce two new features of *Art Gaze*. This issue is not only larger, but includes short stories, supporting local fiction writers as well as the new Art Guide that appears in the middle of the magazine. I am hoping this will help keep me on track with local events, as I am often disappointed to realise that with the incredible speed that the weeks travel, shows come and go before I have scheduled them in.

Looking at the Art Guide, with the large amount of exhibitions and events happening, there shouldn't be a dull moment this winter for art lovers in Townsville.

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Image courtesy of Umbrella Studios

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Photograph taken from *Cove* by Suzon Fuks, Courtesy of James Cook University



Laura Tilley performing at *See Hear Now*. Detail of photograph by Glen O'Malley. Courtesy of the Music Centre North Queensland



Elissa Jenkins as Dusty Springfield in *Dusty*, Courtesy of the North Queensland Opera and Music Theatre

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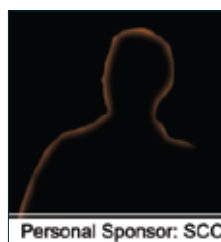
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Short fiction story from local writer, Lori Hurst



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Tom Jefferson performing at the *See Hear Now* festival, photograph by Glen O'Malley, Courtesy of Music Centre North Queensland

See Hear Now 2010 Festival

JAK HENSON

Seated in an arts studio as part of an audience, I could see musical instruments, digital screens, projectors, paint, lights, smoke, string, and people prepared to perform but I had no idea what was to come. And either did the artists. *See Hear Now* was an arts festival of improvisation, combining art disciplines that are not commonly experienced in the one space. The musicians appeared to keep a tempo for the visual artists, performance artists and digital projections. The room became a sound-scape with no shortage of focal points.

Each performance lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, whereby the audience would have a short break and move into a separate studio to find new artists prepared with a different collection of art forms to present. Within one of the

sessions, artist Michelle Hall moved around the space with balls of string, creating a web between the musicians, audience and anyone else within the space. Her movements were slow and although I would have liked to see her

guidance. I remember admiring her drawing about mid way through the entire performance and almost wanted her to stop working. Her final work, however, maintained an interesting visual aesthetic. Gayle commented that

‘working live in front of an audience and responding spontaneously to their subject is not a common practice’

move more cohesively with the varying tempo, she maintained a hypnotic pace.

Gayle Mabo used pastel and paint to create an artwork with the audience watching her development. It was not only interesting to see a drawing come to life, but Gayle used the mood of the sound-scape as part of her artistic

she too was keen to see the final result once all the lights were turned on as the colours she used were transformed by the coloured lights in the studio.

The event was held by Music Centre North Queensland, directed by Michael Whiticker, with great organisational support from Manager, Margaret Caley.

The visual arts aspect of the show was curated by Sue Tilley and Selena Smith.

Sue Tilley discusses her experience:

'The invitation to take on the role as co-curator, along with Selena Smith, in the *See Hear Now* 2010 Festival was an invitation for both of us to step well out of our comfort zones.

Our approach was to establish a framework that enabled visual artists to respond creatively to the stimulus of both music and movement within each session. The challenge of course, was that we were establishing parameters around work that we were yet to see or hear, as the entire event is built on the premise of improvisation. Our aim was to add visual content which extended, complemented and responded to the work of the musicians and dancers, without distracting from, or competing with it.

Our emphasis was on the engaging process, not outcome, and combining dynamic and static responses from the various disciplines; painting, drawing, sculpture, installation and digital, which would be effective in a brief time frame. The Trystero System performance is an example of the duality we sought. Indigenous artist Gail Mabo painted at an easel as the static response, while Michele Hall moved dynamically through the space creating a string installation; both responding to Mike Cooper and Grayson Cooke's deconstructed jungle beats and processed slide guitar.

While interpretation and improvisation are familiar to visual artists, working live in front of an audience and responding spontaneously to their subject is not a common practice. The key is overcoming self-consciousness and immersing in the music and movement, responding intuitively. This frees the artist from the constraints of technique and outcome, resulting in experimental expression—pure creativity. The artists worked in a variety of media, from paint, to pixels, light, sand, on surfaces from paper or canvas and finally the nude human form.

The outcome was a series of cohesive and exciting performances, which thoroughly stimulated the senses of the audience and participants alike.'

Tom Jefferson discusses his involvement:

'Performing in the opening show for *See Hear Now*, I manipulated found objects and sand on a light box, which was projected on the stage wall behind the performing musicians, dancers and visual artists. This physical manipulation of mediums was projected through filters and effects, digitally extending the aesthetic possibilities of the process. The work added a melodic digital temperament to the improvisational blend of audio and visual juxtaposition.

I am currently undertaking a Bachelor of New Media Arts at James Cook University and became involved in the

See Hear Now festival after working on a mixed media installation with local artists for an exhibition at eMerge Media Space.'

Tom's projections, among other performances, was visually captivating and something that cannot be seen at a traditional arts exhibition. If ever comes an opportunity to attend an improvised arts event, whether it be music, digital work, performance or any other style, I would recommend jumping on the opportunity.



Performance by Ian Brunskill, percussion (left) and Mark Reed, actor (right), *See Hear Now* festival, photograph by Glen O'Malley, Courtesy of Music Centre North Queensland



Performance by Michelle Hall, *See Hear Now* festival, photograph by Glen O'Malley, Courtesy of Music Centre North Queensland



Lisa Pullen, detail of *Bluebeard*, two colour linocut, 2008, 418x297mm, Courtesy of Umbrella Studios

Night Ladder

BERNADETTE ASHLEY

Award-winning Brisbane based printmakers, Gwenn Tasker, Lisa Pullen and poet / artist, Angela Gardner, chose to include Townsville on the touring itinerary for their exhibition *Night Ladder* for quite specific reasons.

'Townsville has a reputation for high quality fine press publications and... Umbrella Studio with its focus on printmaking through the compact print exhibition, its support for works on paper and its policy of encouraging emerging local Queensland artists is a natural venue for this project.'

As well as several Australian galleries, *Night Ladder* toured to the UK to be showcased at a conference at the Centre for Fine Print Research in Bristol in July 2009 before being shown at Umbrella from 12 March to 18 April this year. The two large format limited edition artists' books of poems and prints featured as part of the exhibition and have been acquired by some major

collections, including The National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, The National Library of Wales, The Biblioteca Librorum Apud Artificem in Sydney, and private collections.

Gardner, Pullen and Tasker already knew each other through Impress Print in Brisbane, but this is their first joint project. It is an excursion to the darker undercurrents of mythology and fairy stories, developed from mutual interest in timeless and universal truths regarding the human condition, reworked in a contemporary manner.

The exhibition has two main parts, *Night Ladder* and *The Twelve Labours*. *Night Ladder* features large linocuts by Pullen, responding to a suite of poems by Gardner retelling some of the well known fairy tales of Charles Perrault, including *Bluebeard*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *Cinderella*. An evocative poem, *Night Ladder* by Gardner sets

the tone (and provides the show's title), describing the nocturnal transition into deeper, untethered areas of the psyche.

Pullen's fluid style, simple and striking, yet charged with symbolism, complements the poems beautifully. She visually represents the dark undertones and lurking threats within the stories by her use of sinister characters, ambiguous negative space and the dreamy vulnerability of the central characters, (invariably inexperienced young females) by their blank, innocent expressions when faced with the wolves.

The prints are in black and intense red ink on white paper, which is Pullen's characteristic and an intentional 'passionate combination'. They reek of blood and violence, acknowledging the original role of fairy stories prior to being sanitised in the Victorian era, which was to instruct uneducated girls how to avoid life's pitfalls and inevitable predators,

and to take care of themselves in an unsympathetic and patriarchal world.

Gardner's other suite of poems re-imagines *The Twelve Labours* of Hercules, with twelve etchings by Gwenn Tasker, predominantly printed in earth tones and black, and demonstrating her mastery of line and dynamic composition skills. Tasker's evocative, provocative and deliberately unsettling images are visually and symbolically multi-layered.

Amongst the classic Greek art references, such as the depiction of the hero in profile, contemporary hints draw out timeless and universal truths from the mythological matter, sometimes humorously. Juxtaposing the hero in an animal skin against his object of lust in suspender belt and high heels takes a moment to register, and is a clever device to make us realise this is not a straight re-telling of the myth.

Tasker's loaded imagery draws on lines of Gardner's contemporary poetry for its titles. Reading the text alongside the prints in the artists' book, one illuminates the other. Gardner's words fulfil her stated ambition to '...evoke associations and reflections around the issues of gender, authority, violence and the relationship between the human and the rest of the natural world to provoke both philosophical and ethical questions in the viewers.'

Rounding out the exhibition is Gardner's series of small screenprints, *The World*

Turns, featuring snatches of historical and navigational documents, and diagrams of navigational instruments, dated from just after Captain Cook's voyages of discovery in this region.

The prints are overlaid with words from her poem of the same name, a

concise meditation on her experience of migration, written during an international flight, highlighting that dislocation is as much a feature of modern travel as it was of historical exploration and colonisation. Originally coming from the UK, it is poetic that Gardner's work now resides in major collections there.



Gwenn Tasker, *The Ninth Labour*, 2009, 500 x 350mm, Courtesy of Umbrella Studios

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Queensland Government
Townsville

Renew Townsville



Image courtesy of Mark Kennedy

Call for Submissions

Renew Townsville are looking for artists, cultural projects and community groups to use and maintain vacant spaces in Flinders mall until they become commercially viable or are redeveloped.

A submission form for those interested can be found at www.renewtownsville.com

Deadline for submissions is 30 June 2010. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions section of the website if you have any queries.

Renew Townsville has been set up by passionate volunteers to find short and medium term uses for empty buildings in Townsville's CBD that are currently vacant, disused, or awaiting redevelopment. The project has not been set up to manage long term uses, own properties or permanently develop sites but to generate activity in buildings until that future long term activity happens.

To keep up to date with announcements, join our mailing list by emailing hello.renewtownsville@gmail.com with 'Mailing List' in the subject header. Find us on Facebook at *Renew Townsville*.

A family affair

ERIC NASH

Perc Tucker Regional Gallery
exhibitions in June

Exhibitions presented at Perc Tucker Regional Gallery during the months of May and June ensure that any visit is truly a family affair. *play lunch* - Xstrata Annual Children's Exhibition – takes up the downstairs space and exudes energy and excitement. Concurrently, the upstairs space plays home to *Alter*, an exhibition of delicate etchings, collages and assemblages by Glen Skien, one of north Queensland's favourite sons – an ensemble that has the mothers swooning while the kids are at play (lunch).

Play lunch, like previous children's exhibitions developed by the Gallery, presents a blend of artworks and activities that allows children to both view AND engage, cultivating an

appreciation for the visual arts, but also a sense of involvement. The concept of an art exhibition dedicated to children was brought to Perc Tucker a number of years ago in response to the city's demographics, which included a large percentage of young families, and was inspired by some groundbreaking exhibitions that were being developed by Queensland Art Gallery in the late 1990s. A number of factors, such as Townsville being a garrison city, have dictated that the city's demographics haven't changed drastically, and over the years the children's exhibition formula has been reworked and refined.

At the heart of *play lunch* is the theme of food – an important topic in school curriculum; a focal point for a number

of government awareness campaigns; a source of enjoyment in a child's everyday life; and a consistent source of inspiration for artists throughout the years – one need only look at the abundance of still life paintings over the years.

One artist who has a history of success creating food-themed artworks is Ruth Downes, and her exhibitions *Lunch for the Trades* and *Tea Party* form the core of *play lunch*. While these works are not to be touched, they provide a visual feast (if you'll excuse the pun). Born in Sydney in 1954, Downes studied interior design at the National Art School, Sydney, graduating in 1975, has worked as an artist at the Australian Museum in Sydney, and since 1988 has run her



A cup of tea, a Bex and a good lie down

Ruth Downes, *A cup of tea, a Bex and a good lie down*

own business in public artwork, visual identity, exhibition and graphic design.

In *Lunch for the Trades*, Downes has invented a menu of lunches that are appropriate to the particular trade through the shapes, materials, visual pins and jokes and witty text. Downes' work shows a real enjoyment in inventiveness with both language and materials. Each meal is a creative interpretation of a trade and the ingredients of the 'meal' a representation of the techniques and skills of the relevant trade. There is a depth of meaning to the works that belies their jovial appearance, and of the exhibition Downes said:

'This is a tribute to those who work in the trades – a recognition of talents and expertise undervalued in our society. This cafeteria-style spread of constructed 'meals' is a play on the language and visual delights of modern cuisine intersected with images of food wrought by each trade. Each meal assemblage employs the specific materials of a particular trade. There is a huge diversity and unexpected beauty in these materials, a beauty that

greater whole that is not immediately discernable. Food has become another range of consumable 'products'. We

live in an age of food creation, artificial enhancement and uniquely personalised meals for every physical type, health condition, lifestyle or profession. Our obsession with food as entertainment has led to the creation of meals tailor-made to satisfy our increasing demands for visual excitement, novelty value and infinite choice. Today, 'what we do' defines us more than ever before, so this culinary reflection of daily toil reinforces a sense of self in an unexpected yet celebratory way. The cafeteria setting has an unaffected production line quality, appropriate for a work-a-day meal.'

The artist's wit is again showcased in the forty miniature sculptures of teacups in *Tea Party*. There is a real sense of the artist at play in these works, each manipulating the word 'tea', and Downes' versatility is evident in the wide range of sculptural and craft techniques employed.

Among the more boisterous activities

'Among the more boisterous activities for children to
"sink their teeth into" is a giant sandwich.'

can transcend their utilitarian function. The skills, techniques and dexterity of the trades are enormous yet are often derided as old-fashioned, mechanical and prosaic. Much of their work is private and hidden, or contributes to a

for children to 'sink their teeth into' is a giant sandwich. Created by members of the Fibres and Fabrics Association, it has proved immensely popular as children pull apart the bread, lettuce, carrot, beetroot, egg and cheese, wear



Ruth Downes, *MECHANIC'S Minestrone Soup, hub cap, car parts & tools, silicone*



Glen Skien, *Assemblage 4*, 2009, collage and assemblage

various items, rebuild the sandwich, and inevitably climb in to become a part of the sandwich themselves. The Kids' Kitchen is a play area with a range of kitchen-themed toys and art activities, and there is a still life set up for any young artist to try their hand at rearranging and drawing. A number of local artists, including Jan Hynes, Martin Kizur and Carolyn Dodds, also have work included, and a range of questions and activities are built around these works in the free activity booklet and within the exhibition itself.

While the kids' time is consumed, parents can venture upstairs to see the beautiful work of Glen Skien. The exhibition *Alter* explores the experience

etching was still very much connected to the traditional printmaking processes that inform a very particular aesthetic. I then made a deliberate attempt at discovering a connection between printmaking and my own aesthetic response ... something that is as close to my sense of experience as it can possibly be. Looking back now it seems only natural that collage and assemblage would make a more poignant connection to my experience of the everyday, especially living in an inner city environment. You have almost an overload of sensory experience and imagery. From being here in Brisbane, my work has become more visceral and there's a rawness to it that I'm enjoying.'

incorporate items he has collected and, as such, many of the works have a sense of the memory of the object. Each photograph, the dog-eared books, everything has had a life of its own, and if the items could speak, would tell a unique story that would form a part of a life of someone the viewer will never know.

'An element to my work is it has a sense of layers of meaning. And, quite often, what adds to that layering is the use of materials that already have an existing history.'

Of course, Skien imparts his own meanings on the works, evident in the developed iconography previously mentioned, but he ideally maintains 'a sense of vagueness to what's happening when I'm creating, because once you describe something, you destroy it, and I'm conscious of that'. In this, the works are there for the viewer to discover, to bring their own experiences to, and that makes the experience all the more poignant.

Perc Tucker Regional Gallery plays host to two engrossing exhibitions that have wide appeal in May and June, and any visit to the Gallery during this time has the potential to be a family affair.

...'because once you describe something, you destroy it, and
I'm conscious of that.'

of gathering knowledge of the external world through the subtle and often poetic engagement of the everyday. *Alter* shows from 7 May until 15 August 2010.

Skien has strong connections with north Queensland – born in Nambour in 1959, he and his family moved to Mackay while Glen was still a child. In Mackay, he became a signwriting apprentice at TAFE, and it was here he was able to hone many of his technical skills. He travelled Europe, returned and completed a Diploma of Fine Arts course at Townsville TAFE, and in 1990 moved once again to Mackay, and resumed signwriting. In 2006, Skien moved to Brisbane, where he has a studio and is completing his Masters of Visual Arts at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University.

Townsville viewers will be most familiar with Skien's etchings, with their delicate and refined aesthetic. While Skien still incorporates etching into his work, and a number of prints appear in *Alter*, it is collage and assemblage works that have taken precedence. He explains how:

'... printmaking, etching in particular, was one of those things that I came to Brisbane [from Mackay] with the full intention of just using as my medium. But I came to a point where I realised that the way I had been engaging with

There are a number of recurring themes and a developed iconography in Skien's work – some of the symbols, such as the boat, Townsville viewers will recall – while his experiences in Brisbane have given rise to others, such as the umbrella. The umbrella itself references Brisbane directly, with the artist owning one for the first time upon moving from Mackay, and the series of works is what Skien describes as an 'existential narrative'. It got to the point that he would even keep a diary of his experiences with this new, uniquely Brisbane (for Skien) item, and it became a strong icon of the 'here and now'. Skien began incorporating the umbrella into a number of etchings he was working on, and these soon evolved into box relief and collage works. It marks an important departure point from traditional etching to collage and assemblage, a transition the artist described as better suiting his life in Brisbane and what he's trying to express, and underlines how the umbrella 'as a symbol became very much connected to my new life in Brisbane'.

Skien is an artist who has been inspired variously by artists such as George Baldessin, Kurt Schwitters and Joseph Cornell, but works in a purely intuitive manner. He does not predetermine, but reacts to his materials and situations to achieve his desired aesthetic. Many of Skien's assemblages and collages



Glen Skien, *All of the things I could've told you about birds*, 2009, collage and resin in tobacco tin, 4 x 4 x 1cm



Photograph: Suzon Fuks, Courtesy of James Cook University

BERNADETTE ASHLEY

I was already intrigued and prepared for something quite different as I waited to enter *Cove*, an interactive installation by Cairns cross-media arts collective Bonemap; for a start, the ten minute piece was limited to an audience of one person per session.

Ushered through a black curtain into a dim circular space enclosed by a black scrim, my senses were immediately engaged by floating particles and a flapping butterfly projected onto the scrim and the frisson of excitement and fear at stepping from a small platform into a swirling ankle-deep fog of dry ice. I registered the 'cove', a surrounding topography created by piles of old suitcases, and began to walk through the space, waving my arms as suggested in the program, *...movement is rewarded...*

The reason for an audience of one then became obvious, as it allows for an infra-red motion sensing system to track the viewer, and alters the projections and the sound-scape to follow gestures. I was playing with the possibilities and making patterns, when the area behind the scrim lit up to reveal a broader landscape of suitcase islands, then a woman in a red satin dress pulling a trunk behind her peered back at me.

Like the projections, her actions were partly predetermined and partly responsive to her audience, and the more you looked, waved and gestured, the more she engaged with you with like behaviour as she performed a narrative sequence. She moved gradually through the area, eventually opened the trunk, and then appeared to disappear into its depths, legs in the air as the scene faded to black, and I was left to explore my little haven again.

Waves washed the scrim and the sound-scape was suggestive of the ebb and flow of tides and reverberating industrial noise of a port. The woman in the red dress appeared again, looking and listening for something on one of the islands of cases, again looking to the viewer for interaction, maybe clues? Eventually she chose a small red case and listened to it, before opening and speaking quietly into it, and again the scene faded to darkness.

Fog and clouds moved across the surface of the fabric, then a flock of birds, as the woman appeared again—but backlit she had become a bird too. Her dress unfolded as wings, her shadow looming (huge on the scrim), flying away from the sunset into the twilight. As the viewer moved she

slightly changed direction to follow, creating a sense of flight and forward movement, until night fell and *Cove* was complete.

The ten minutes of *Cove* was a journey, or discovery, in the physical and immediate way of entering the space and exploring the possibilities of interaction with the set, the performer and the technology. But even more, its timeless and dreamlike quality evoked themes of migration and isolation and the search to connect with someone or something familiar, embodied by the paradoxically adventurous yet vulnerable lady in red.

Cove was presented by KickArts Contemporary Arts, JCU (SoCA) and Bonemap at Jute Theatre, Centre of Contemporary Arts, Cairns, on 29 & 30 April and 1 May 2010.

Russell Milledge (media design)
Rebecca Youdell (performer)
Steven Campbell (sound)
Jason Holdsworth (programming)
Stephen Barton (technical)

Cove was supported by a Creative Arts Research Grant and a Faculty Research grant through James Cook University.

Art Guide for WINTER

Exhibitions
Performances
Workshops

Date	Event Style	Title / Details	Place
Weekly	Dance / fitness classes	Sweatshops	Dancenorth, Cnr Walker & Stanley St, Townsville
2–6	Dance theatre	<i>The Cry</i>	Dancenorth, Cnr Walker & Stanley St, Townsville
3–5	Performance (Age 15+)	<i>Vaginas R Us</i>	Cowshed Theatre (next to swimming pool) Western Campus, James Cook University
3	Visual art	<i>The silence of Becoming and Disappearing.</i> A private viewing of Ephemeral dust works by Hannah Bertram.	Sulphur Crest Guest House in West End
3–4	Musical for the family	<i>The Gruffalo</i>	Townsville Civic Theatre
4	New media exhibition opening	<i>Boss</i> (Best of Student Show)	eMerge Media Space, School of creative arts, James Cook University. Exhibiting until 30 July
4	Visual art exhibition opening of three artists	<i>Is now and will never be again:</i> Jan Hynes <i>Nature of symmetry:</i> Dorothy Forbes <i>Passion and Personality:</i> Donna Beningfield	Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville. Exhibiting until 11 July
5	World music	Seaman Dan, with support act Patrick Levi & the Flow	Court Theatre, Cnr Sturt & Stokes Streets, Townsville
6	Visual artist talk / Concert	Jan Hynes artist talk, follows a special performance by Tablelands, Finger-style guitarist Danny Ross	Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville
10	Dance performance	<i>Rhythm of the dance</i>	Townsville Civic Theatre
10	Writing workshop	<i>Mastering story structure.</i> Presented by Writers in Townsville (WITS)	Aitkenvale Library meeting room
11–13	Musical comedy	<i>Menopause the musical</i>	Townsville Civic Theatre
13	Concert	The showcase North Queensland Concert: Featuring Kasey Chambers	Endeavour Park, Murray Sporting Complex, Townsville
18	Concert and dinner	The Eagles Experience Tribute dinner & show	Jupiters Casino, grand ballroom, Townsville
18	Jazz performance / forum	Courtroom Jazz: Dave Salisbury and friends	Court Theatre, Cnr Sturt & Stokes Streets, Townsville
19	Cultural Dance / Film	<i>Earth and Sea Festival</i>	Dancenorth, Cnr Walker & Stanley St, Townsville
19–20	Visual art workshop	Create your own letterbox with Jan Hynes	Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville.
20	Visual art workshop	Write a letter and design an envelope with Lynn Scott-Cumming	Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville.
22–23	Concert	<i>Morning melodies</i> —The swinging sixties and Seekers songbook	Townsville Civic Theatre
25	Visual art exhibition opening	<i>Ted May and the Forlorn Hope.</i> In developing The Forlorn Hope, May created 86 large scale charcoal images on canvas and linen—in stark contrast to his previous practice. The Forlorn Hope is inspired by the failed attempt by the South Australian Government in 1860 to establish the town of Palmerston	Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Cnr Denham St & Flinders Mall, Townsville. Exhibiting until 29 August
26–27	Ballet	<i>Swan Lake</i>	Townsville Civic Theatre
27 & 4 July	visual art workshop	Enneagram workshop with Donna Beningfield and Margaret Trevethan	Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville.

Time	Cost	Contact
6–7pm	\$15 casual	4772 2549 www.dancenorth.com.au
7:30pm	\$10–\$35	4772 2549 www.dancenorth.com.au
7pm Thurs, 8pm Fri & Sat	FREE	4781 3142 soca.events@jcu.edu.au
3–6pm	FREE Bookings essential	4772 7109
6:60pm Thurs, 9:30am and 11:45am Fri	\$12	4727 9797
5pm	FREE	4781 3142 soca.events@jcu.edu.au
7pm	FREE	4772 7109
7:30pm	\$10–\$25	4721 1771
11am	FREE	4772 7109
7:30pm	\$49.90–\$69.90	4727 9797
10–4pm	\$45	witsnq.blogspot.com
7:30pm Fri, 1:30pm & 7:30pm Sat, 3pm Sun	\$15.50–\$45	4727 9797
7pm	\$12.50–\$52.50	4771 4000
6:45pm	\$49.50–\$99 (Inc. 2 course meal + drink package)	4771 4000
7:30pm	\$10–\$15	4721 1771
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11am	\$9.50–\$12	4727 9797
7pm	FREE	4727 9011 ptrg@townsville.qld.gov.au
7:30pm Sat, 3pm Sun	\$28–\$50	4727 9797
	Bookings essential	4772 7109



See Hear Now festival, detail of photograph by Glen O'Malley, Courtesy of Music Centre North Queensland

Art Guide for WINTER

Exhibitions
Performances
Workshops

Date	Event Style	Title / Details
5–9	Visual art workshop	The Visionary Artist: Craft and Concept by Adam Scott Miller. A workshop dedicated to educating students on the evolution of technique / purpose in creating art that best serves the artist's intention
10	Writers sharing stories	<i>Mastering story structure.</i> Poetry, short story readings. Writers in Townsville (WITS)
11	Visual art workshop	Monoprinting with stencils workshop with Jill O'Sullivan
13–14	Theatre	<i>Lying Cheating Bastard</i>
16	Visual art exhibition openings of four exhibitions	<i>Here's to love lust and laughter:</i> Uli Liessmann's exhibit is a site specific installation of large scale works on paper <i>Opal, Mud, Fossil:</i> Linda Jackson explores the mystery of colour, the way the precious opal embedded in the stone creates patterns and landscapes <i>Germinate:</i> The works of Claudine Marzik & Tijn Meulendijks depict the North Queensland environment and reflect society's current focus on ecological sustainability <i>Stretching the truth:</i> Alan Valentine exhibits a light-hearted body of work with wire and other media that embellishes personal observations and thoughts of every-day life
18	Visual art	Linda Jackson Open Studio Public Welcoming. Renowned fabric and textile artist.
20	Visual art / Performance / Music	<i>A Movable Feast:</i> The Ultimate Creative Fundraising Experience Umbrella Studio in collaboration with the Australian Festival of Chamber Music hosts the ultimate fundraising event. Enjoy great food by local chef Michel, a musical premiere, and original wearable art of Linda Jackson modelled by Excite dancers
21–25	Musical comedy	<i>Monty Python's Spamalot</i>
23–25	Visual art workshop	Textiles workshop with Linda Jackson
27–28	Concert	<i>Morning melodies—Singsational</i>
30	Concert	<i>The Butterfly effect</i>
30 & 2 Aug	Theatre for the family	<i>Tashi</i>
30–7 Aug	Concert	Australian Festival of Chamber Music
31	Nude performance / Music / Visual art	<i>His and Hers</i>



See *Hear Now* festival, detail of photograph by Glen O'Malley, Courtesy of Music Centre North Queensland

Date	Event Style	Title / Info
6, 7 & 13, 14	Performance / Music / Art / Dance / Fashion	Nocturnal—A dark park cabaret
17	Theatre	Inside Out
21	Opera	The Merry Widow
21	Concert	John Rowles
21, 27, 28	Drag performance (Also 3, 4, 10, 11 September)	Rocky Horror Picture Show—The Gender Bender Experience

July

Place	Time	Cost	Contact
Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville		Bookings essential	4772 7109
Thuringowa Library, Thuringowa Drive, Kirwan	11am	FREE	witsnq.blogspot.com
Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville		Bookings essential	4772 7109
Townsville Civic Theatre	7:30pm	\$15.50–\$45	4727 9797
Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville	7pm	FREE	4772 7109
Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville	11am	FREE	4772 7109
Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville	7pm	FREE Bookings essential	4771 4144
Townsville Civic Theatre	8pm Wed, Thurs & Fri, 2pm & 8pm Sat, 6pm Sun	\$20–\$40	4727 9797
Umbrella Studios, 482 Flinders Street, Townsville		Bookings essential	4772 7109
Townsville Civic Theatre	11am	\$9.50–\$12	4727 9797
Jupiter's Casino, grand ballroom, Townsville	8pm	\$33–\$38	4771 4000
Riverway arts centre, Thuringowa	6:30pm Fri, 9:30am & 11:45 Mon	\$12	4727 9797
Townsville Civic Theatre			4727 9797 www.afcm.com.au
Court Theatre, Cnr Sturt & Stokes Streets, Townsville	1:30pm Bar opens, 2pm start	\$36–\$40	1800 449 977 www.fullthrottletheatre.com



August

Place	Time	Cost	Contact
Court Theatre, Cnr Sturt & Stokes Streets, Townsville	7:30pm Bar opens, 8pm start	\$20	4721 5433 www.fullthrottletheatre.com
Townsville Civic Theatre	7:30pm	\$15.50–\$45	4727 9797
Townsville Civic Theatre	7:30pm	\$26–\$50	4727 9797
Riverway Arts Centre, Thuringowa	8pm	\$40	4727 9797
Court Theatre, Cnr Sturt & Stokes Streets, Townsville	6:30pm Bar opens, 7:15pm & 9:30pm	\$25	4721 0244 www.fullthrottletheatre.com

On the Street, Townsville

HEATHER HAWKINS

Stylist

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As a stylist living in Townsville, people are constantly saying to me 'You must be dying up here without any decent shops!'. Or, 'How do you survive without a David Jones?'. But I want to tell you that Townsville is a shopping *mecca*. And there *is* life beyond your two favourite letters – D & J. Before I hear you whimper words like 'where?' 'how?' or 'when?', please take a breath and another sip of your soy chai latte. (Cynical doesn't suit you darling!) I am here to give you the basics of the ins and outs of shopping in Townsville; how to put together a stylish on-trend outfit; where to nab a bargain; and, generally, how to shop cheaply but with style.

To do this I've decided to take a page out of The Sartorialist's blog to show you just what Townsville has to offer. 'The Sartorialist' is a fashion blog by Scott Shuman – an international fashion photographer based in New York. He carries his camera with him throughout New York, Milan, Paris, Tokyo ... wherever he may be, and takes photos of people that have dressed in a way that's caught his eye. He finds this fashion inspiration 'on the street' and posts the shots on his blog for all to see. It gives you an insight into the fashion world of – not only that particular person – but of the place they live. For this time and this time only – DO pass the shops without looking, DO connect to the internet without peeking at Net-a-Porter, and immediately add 'The Sartorialist' to your favourites list.

So, with Danny Tucker as my photographer-extraordinaire, we



Image One: *Summer Cool*, details of outfit in article, Image courtesy of Heather Hawkins

set about creating 'Sartorialist'-style shots 'on the street' in Townsville. My challenge? Keeping the outfits completely local. Now, for many of you, the thought of updating your look and finding that 'perfect' outfit is lost in translation from the catwalks to your wardrobe here in Townsville. Without the usual resources – city malls, department stores and all the big fashion names – the seams of your look are coming undone. But why have you let it be so? There are so many wonderful stores and designers here in Townsville that there are no excuses. Admittedly, it might require a little more searching, or hunting around, but we must not be fickle fashionistas. Do not hang up your Jimmy Choo's the moment you hit a snag. Simply change into your Marc Jacobs mousy flats and keep searching.

Rock Chic (Image Two): Lauren wears: dress by Katelyn Aslett; necklace by

'Gossip Girl' for Big W; hoes from Target (yes, Target); and ring from Diva. (Satin clutch is stylist's own – and no, it's not for sale!) Immediately we are thrown head first into my fashion rule number #1: offsetting your outfit. Take one expensive item and team it with cheaper pieces to 'offset' the expensive purchase. (*Please note: this theory is quite new, and still misunderstood by most husbands.*) This is the hardest thing to do in fashion, and is essentially what we call 'styling'. The most common mistake people make is buying a complete outfit from one shop. To create more interest in your outfits you need to acquire 'key' pieces and team them back with basics and other quirky items you've found along the way. With this outfit I've taken an exquisitely feminine dress by Katelyn Aslett, which is handmade of silk and felt with hand-stitched glass beads, and thrown it back with some fabulous suede rock-chic



Image Two: *Rock Chic*, details of outfit in article, Image courtesy of Heather Hawkins



Image Three: *Casual Glam*, details of outfit in article, Image courtesy of Heather Hawkins



Image Four: *Power Dressing*, details of outfit in article, Image courtesy of Heather Hawkins

peep-toe bootlets from Target. Then I've tossed on a preppy, yet tough, necklace and a big chunky ring. Grab a cute satin clutch as you're walking out the door and, *voila*, rock chic. This is a big trend at the moment and we're seeing leather everywhere, as well as tough boots and biker jackets styled with more floaty, feminine garments. Don't be afraid to mix tough and pretty (and not just in your wardrobe either.)

Summer Cool (Image One): Lauren wears: vintage dress from the Salvation Army. I've styled this with a leather belt which I made from pieces of leather bought at Spotlight that I painted white; some DKNY wedges; a Country Road scarf; a cute canvas bag; and a sweet necklace from 'Stylish' in Castletown. Here we look at the art of op-shopping. To be honest with you, this dress looked like a nurses' uniform when I saw it on the rack. But I liked the colour and the fabric, so I tried it on. Once I cinched it in at the waist and added some fabulous wedges, I went from drab to fab quicker than you can blink your Diorshow lashes. The key to op-shopping is to look at the fabric. You might shudder over the shape of that 'straight from Gran's cupboard' dress, but you notice that the print is very on-trend. So chop off the bottom, roll up the sleeves and cut a wide neck and you have a new tee – wear it under your Balmain peaked shoulder jacket and with your favourite skinny leg jeans and you have updated your look. Offsetting your outfit is really important when you buy vintage, especially when it is the key piece of the outfit. If you don't offset and team op-shop with op-shop you will end up with a bohemian-gone-wrong look (think Mary Kate Olsen going through *that* phase.)

Casual Glam (Image Three): Heather wears: skirt by Collette Dinnigan from

The Sale Shop; tee by Mink Pink from Universal Store; jacket from Sussan; sunglasses from Sportsgirl; hat from Target (reduced to \$3!); and handbag by Prada (stylist's own). First, I have to mention that this Collette Dinnigan skirt was reduced to \$50 ... the original price was over \$1000. Outrageous! I know, I go on and on about The Sale Shop, but it truly is fashion heaven in there. Every time I go in I leave with the words 'it was too cheap NOT to buy' trailing behind me. Yes, it might not be merchandised beautifully with big open spaces, but I'll take a cramped change room for a cheap Diane Von Furstenberg any day! And it's having these unusual, beautifully designed pieces in your wardrobe that make your look unique. These are the 'key' pieces. You can see I've used this Collette Dinnigan as my 'key' piece, and styled it with cheap but chic trend pieces to pull together the overall look. *Très effective, non?*

Power Dressing (Image Four): Heather wears: jacket from Jeans West; tee by Mink Pink from Universal Store; shoes by Malene Birger from Domain; and pants from Witchery (www.witchery.com.au). This outfit is very on-trend – made so mostly by the very Balmain peak shoulder jacket. If you missed the fashion train, yes, shoulder pads are back. Such a jacket is a must-have for your winter wardrobe. Even if you only get to wear it twice in Townsville! Another must-have trend item is the harem pant. These Witchery pants are silk, meaning they're lovely and floaty. Very comfortable and perfect for the Townsville climate. We like something to throw on that's baggy and comfortable but still looks like you are a stylish fashionista. And when you team them with our favourite accessory, the white tee (it takes 5 years off instantly), a peak shoulder jacket and some killer heels,

this look means business. And must be worn with attitude.

Note to self: DO go into stores that I normally wouldn't shop at. We don't like precious fashionistas, who drop their keys at valet and say 'Oh, I never go into *those* stores'. To borrow a phrase from the top-end: 'If you never, ever go, you'll never, ever know'. My favourites for a bargain are: Target, Diva, Jeans West, Betts, Big W, Cotton On and Just Jeans. You'll be surprised at how many cheap but chic items you will find. The GFC may be over but it doesn't mean we can't shop affordably. So go on, be a good recessionista and just walk through the door – it won't kill you.

So what are you waiting for? Oh silly me, your nails are still wet. Please don't smudge them. As soon as they're dry it's time for you to get inspired and then get creative. Try putting outfits together differently. Wear your white tee back-to-front so you get a chic boat neck tee. And go out to the shops - even the ones you wouldn't dare to be seen in. Open your eyes and your mind. Remember – start with one key piece and style back with basics or other old favourites in your wardrobe. Offset your expensive garment with a cheap but chic item. And above all, have fun and wear with confidence. Let's create our own 'on the street – Townsville' to make the Sartorialist proud.

Where to find...

The Sartorialist:

thesartorialist.blogspot.com

Katelyn Aslett: katelynaslett.com

The Sale Shop: Sturt Street, Townsville

Domain: Denham Street, Townsville

Universal Store: Castletown Shopping Centre, The Lakes, Townsville

Salvation Army: Kirwan



Tony Woodhouse, Elissa Jenkins and Matthew Isokangas, know as the Springfields in *Dusty*, Courtesy of North Queensland Opera and Music Theatre

DUSTY The Original Pop Diva

BRIAN EDMOND

Dusty is a biographical musical tracing the life and career of Dusty Springfield. It traces her life from when she was plain Mary O'Brien (a catholic schoolgirl brought up in London with dreams of becoming a star) to her rise as pop icon Dusty Springfield, the 'White Lady of Soul'.

Shows of this type – where songs of an artist are shoe-horned into a narrative – are difficult to pull off in a satisfying way. For me, the writers of *Dusty* came up with a script that was weak. While well-executed by the cast (with what they had to work with) I was not convinced that we got to see much of the real Dusty – we got (at least *between* songs) a simplistic veneer and a few less well-known snippets of her life. For instance, she performed in South Africa to a

mixed race crowd and was deported, she was a lesbian, she recorded with the Pet Shop Boys, abused alcohol, was very insecure, was awarded an OBE, and died of breast cancer.

What were wonderful in this show, though, were the great songs of Dusty Springfield. It is these that, no doubt, inspired the show to be written in the first place. Elissa Jenkins in the *Dusty* role carried it off very well indeed. It is a huge role in terms of the amount of stage time and number of songs she sings. It was her performance of the many Dusty songs where we did catch a glimpse of the real Dusty. I particularly enjoyed Jenkins' heart-felt version of *The Look of Love* (one of the best times when a song was sung that drove the narrative). Also very strong in terms of

emotion and connection with the lyrics was the duet *I Just Don't Know What to Do With Myself* between Dusty and Dusty's lesbian partner Reno (Victoria Kersh).

One element of the writing that I did like was the use of the Jiminy Cricket-type character Mary O'Brien (as a schoolgirl), who only Dusty could see and who kept reminding Dusty of her past and warning her of excess. This role was played with great verve and poise by Michelle Higgins.

Also a lot of fun to watch were: Kevin Wright as Dusty's camp hairdresser Rodney; and Janelle Croft as Dusty's dresser Peg. Bernie Lanigan as Mr O'Brien (and I believe as a record producer uncredited in the program)

was strong, as was Rachel Harris as Kay O'Brien.

This show also *looked* great – with the costumes (Robyn Wong, Jan Glasgow, Anne Trimball), wigs/hair (Robert Blankley, Jade Movigliatti) and make-up (Joshua Service, Pat Carr, Lisa Phelan, Debbie Shore, Tess Lamont, Pam Foxlee and Pam Snell) spectacularly evoking the era of the 60s. Dusty's costumes, in particular, were terrific. I also felt the choreography (Kylie Ball) did a great job of locking us in to the 1960s – you don't see folk dancing like that anymore! In a similar vein, I also enjoyed the daggy 60s audience

at Dusty's TV show, swaying along to her songs. Director Bill Munro certainly achieved the 'finish' to the show that he was aiming for.

The set and lights (Jamie Schmidt) worked very well, allowing seamless transitions between scenes, which enabled the show's momentum to be maintained. A very effective scene was the 'psychedelic' scene where Dusty, under the influence, picks up at a night club. Also well executed (although I was not a fan of the song) was the Pet Shop Boys number with Dusty. The medley of songs at the end was fabulous and really showcased the hard-working and

talented cast, ably supported by a very good orchestra.

On the opening night I was a bit surprised that the audience was not more numerous. I hope the run did pick up in that regard because it was a show definitely worth seeing, although I suspect baby boomers and Dusty 'nuts' would have enjoyed it most of all.

Book by John-Michael Howson, David Mitchell, Melvyn Morrow

Director, Bill Munro
NQOMT, Townsville Civic Theatre, 18 March 2010

Interview with writer, Andy King

Jak: How did you start writing?

Andy: Well, I write for pleasure. I probably started writing from life experience. I'd experience things and to try make sense of them, I'd write; poems, prose...

Jak: Is poetry where you started.

Andy: Yeah, I'd say so. I started writing in a format that I could show others. I used to put little books of stories and poems together and give them away to friends for Christmas.

Jak: *No Chips for Stan* is a short story. Are short stories your preferred area?

Andy: I probably only started to write short stories, as in fiction stories, in the last two years when I went back to study at JCU. I did a creative writing course, and I think in doing that, I came to the fact that you could use life experience to write fiction. Before that I probably thought that fiction was just a lot of made up stuff.

No Chips for Stan really came from when I was waiting in queue at a take away place and I heard this fellow have a discussion with the girl behind the counter and I just wrote the dialogue. And then when the fellow turned around, he just looked interesting, and so basically, that brief experience I turned into that story.

So, I guess the story came from wondering what makes that person tick, or in this case I made it up. I looked at the character, he has a story, and I'll make it up. I'll give him an interesting house, give him an interesting past, I've got to make him intriguing to make people care about him and have a bit of an emotional connection to whatever the character is in the story.

So I have an interest in... I call it a small slice of life, in a little slice you can learn a lot about someone, it might be a moment or a half an hour, and you write about that and you can learn about a character through something happening or when something happens to them...

The challenge with short fiction is to show that person. Show a glimpse of who they are and why they've responded that way. You can't exhaust them by describing the whole person.

Jak: When you sit down to write a piece, where do you start?

Andy: I often start with dialogue. I actually like writing the conversations that people have and most of my stories have a fair amount of dialogue in them. I think through talking, listening and describing people talking to one another, you can reveal them a lot more elaborately and distinctly by having them converse. You can get a glimpse of who they are, by what they say, how

they say it, their language, what they don't say, if they have short phrases, its sort of a way of showing a person really quickly, so, yeah, I like writing a dialogue.

Jak: When you go along to writers groups and you share stories, what do you get out of that experience?

Andy: A lot of art is done in isolation, so it's putting your ideas out there. Your reading this stuff for the first time out loud with an audience...

Jak: I imagine that would be scary.

Andy: It is a bit scary, but also interesting. People help out with both the content as well as the technicalities of how you've written it. Like sometimes you've used the same word about five times and because you've been carried away with writing it you don't notice. Someone will say, I think you should take your five 'greats' out. We've got spell-check on the computer, but we don't have repeat-check. So you get honest feedback, you find out what people like and what they don't like and there's varied opinions around the table. And it's the first public hearing of something, so you always go back and touch up and fine tune it, and continue to develop it until you're happy with it.

No Chips for Stan

(Short fiction) ANDY KING

Every Wednesday, Stan made the pilgrimage across the island. He walked for kilometres along the dusty Cockle Bay road past the waste treatment works, after which he reached the ordered confines of Picnic Bay with its people, tourists, traffic, lawns and swings.

Stan's universe is nestled next to a small beach and mangroves. A hand-built fibro shack randomly surrounded by scattered fishing nets, gas bottles, a rowing boat, old bikes and a pile of tins that sits like a midden of circular rusted metals, attesting to his food intake over the seventeen years since he'd arrived.

Stan sort of had to return. His sweetheart, Ellen, had abandoned him six months before he arrived. He and Ellen visited the island while on their honeymoon. It was in 1971. The wooden ferry had left them at the Picnic Bay jetty.

Stan waited for the bus. Ellen's green eyes stared into his. He averted his gaze out into the turquoise waters of the bay. The sudden sound of the decelerating bus jolted him. The 5.20 pm bus, with its name 'Elke' painted on the side, carried him along the 12 kilometres of the windy grey surface, umbilical-like as it wound its way from Picnic to Horseshoe Bay. Before even rising from his seat, he could taste his weekly prize on his lips: he felt them moistening.

Stan crossed the road following his well-worn trajectory to the door. It was dark inside. Stan looked the door up and down and side to side, oblivious to the fascination he was creating among

those who passed by. Stan tried the door, and then shook it. Then he saw it. His knees buckling, he dropped.

Stan grabbed at the long-handled door to end his slide. 'Gone to Melbourne for a wedding – back in a week', it said. He stood back, shaking. He pulled his head back, chin up, looking at the awning above, hoping it would somehow transform and sweep down and crash the shopfront open, to reveal Dawn, who'd say, 'the usual Stan?' Stan shuffled back and perused the side walls of the next shop.

For years he'd walked past this place with no reason to enter. Now he noticed it. Sombreros and colourful capes adorned the wall; the wall featured a Corona beer poster of a Latino man with a three-day growth, drinking from a long-neck bottle. The Mexican-themed cafe spilled outside into a courtyard with twelve wooden tables. A candle was lit upon each of them. A knee-high fence bordered the footpath and through an entrance way in the middle a few more tables were placed.

Across the road a grassed area met the beach. People were arriving and settling on the sand. A spontaneous pilgrimage to the colours and awe created by the last minutes of the sun over the water. Ever-darkening palm trees were becoming black sentinels before the tangerine sky. Boats in the bay began turning on their red and white mast lights, adding to the light show. Stan was eager to join the devoted pilgrims. Stan wandered through the entrance. Sweat was now on his neck in beads of liquid that clung tenuously with each movement. Trying to focus on anything

on the wall that resembled a menu, Stan's path became haphazard as he walked to the register.

'What would you like?' came a voice to his left. Stan came up to the counter. He continued looking at the wall behind the girl. Stan was in black stubby shorts. The elastic was weak and they were sun-bleached grey in patches, and he was wearing a homely grey V-neck jumper over a white T-shirt. 'Can I help you sir?', the girl persisted. 'Can I get some chips here?', he finally asked.

Stan stared blankly up at a sombrero behind the girl, and offered, 'Dawny didn't say anything to me. She would – tells me everything. Dawny always wraps them in paper for me and throws in the vinegar ... knows just how much I like.' He grinned to himself and continued. 'Knows my order by heart, y'know. Don't have to utter a word. "Stan, g'day ... same again", she always said, nodding to me when I come in.'

Stan smiled, remembering Dawny saying to him last week that his shorts needed a wash. He had dutifully hand-washed his three pairs and he'd been looking forward to the banter with her, particularly if she hadn't noticed.

Stan was brought back to 'Mexico on Magnetic' by the voice of the girl. 'Sorry – but they only closed yesterday', she said, and countered, 'We don't have chips, but we do have string fries'. 'Oh, is that what they're calling them now ... string fries ... Mmm', Stan mused. 'I'll have some thank you. Do they come wrapped or in a bag?', he asked. 'In a styrene container', the girl added. 'And that'll be \$5.50 thanks.' 'Five-fifty



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served up in plastic ... Shit. No way', said Stan, sliding his hand over the \$10 note he had just placed on the counter. Stan shuffled across from the counter considering what to do.

Two bubbly girls entered the shop with a nervous haste. 'Two flat whites and two beers please', requested the blonde one. 'Sure. That'll be \$17.60 all up. Have you had a good day?', the girl behind the counter enquired. 'Oh, it was great out there. It was like 20 metres visibility. We were so lucky we saw this red fish. We were told it's very rare to be seen here and we were just snorkelling. It looked like a Nemo, a real deep red colour. Not a bit like home, it's very cold there now', she added. She took her change and crossed to where her friend was seated across from Stan.

Smiling at the older man she offered, 'I really love this place, the weather is so wonderful'.

'It was a Banded Possum Wrasse', Stan replied. 'You were lucky.'

The blonde's friend reached for her pen and jotted intently in the journal open in front of her.

'Where are you from?', Stan enquired. 'I'm from England. We're both over here on holidays for one month only', she answered.

'Where are you from?', the blonde echoed.

Stan rubbed his still wet forehead, and replied 'I've come from Cockle Bay, and I'm not sure why'.

Stan looked away, staring at the beer poster. He spied a hammock of multicoloured liquorice stripes in the background behind the depicted drinker. Would Mexico be hotter than the island? Stan pondered. A hammock would be useful tied between the Kapok trees behind the shack, he thought ... Nah, have to keep it clean and store it ... probably rot in the wet season stored under the bed. Sighting the searing yellow sun hanging above the hammock, Stan recalled his dusk destination.

Looking toward the beach, Stan sauntered out of the shop. He was hampered by a large group filing through the gateway.

At the kerb, Stan noticed it was suddenly quite dark. Out to sea he could make out a line of disappearing half-grey light sitting above the sea line. Crossing the roadway, he then stood still on the grass. Stan couldn't even discern the outline of the bay's trademark palms.

Stan didn't make it to the sand and instead proceeded along the park's fringe with the roadway. The roadway had a bricked border bridging it with the grassed area. Stan walked intently and accurately on the bricks till he reached the bus stop. It consisted of a small steel bench seat located under a roof of arched wrought iron. Stan leant against one post of the shelter. He stared at the drain set into the gutter across from the stop.

Stan focussed his attention on his leaning post, and began scraping into

the white paint of it with his toughened thumb nail.

Others started to mingle behind him and the two girls from the shop arrived and sat giggling on the seat.

Out of the darkness came 'Elke'. Stan looked up from the post and was startled by the white rectangular light in the night, like a lighthouse – announcing Picnic Bay. Stan looked into Ellen's green eyes, making out the outline of a hill where they had once laid and had a long lunch and longer cuddle. Stan tried to see their shapes. Was he in his Army greens on leave? Ellen was in the pretty blue dress she wore often.

'Stan! you going to Picnic Bay or what?', sought the driver, dressed in his tropical shirt.

Last at the stop, Stan gave a thumbs up, trod up the three metal steps and said, 'Two for Picnic Bay, thanks'. Looking past Stan, down the steps, the driver grinned knowingly and replied, 'Sure Stan, two for Picnic'. Stan showed the driver his War Veterans card, exchanged change for a chit, and sat behind the driver.

As they passed Dawny's, Stan closed his eyes, opening them moments later to stare into the darkness beyond the bus interior.

No Chips for Stan was 'Highly commended' in the Writers of Townsville 2008 Awards for Fiction and 'Winner' of the Pauline Walsh Award 2009 for short fiction (a Sydney Writers Fellowship Award).



Andy King, Detail of *Dusk Star*—Horseshoe Bay

Terror in Black & White

(Short fiction) LORI HURST

Carol woke to the insistent demands of the phone and glanced irritably at the clock. It was two-thirty and she'd hardly moved off the bed all day. She'd been half-dreaming. She did that a lot lately. Like a re-run of an old movie, she replayed the end of her marriage. If only she could fast forward and get on with her life.

She dreaded each encounter with her mother. With gritted teeth and plastered on smile, she endured the 'Have you she met anyone yet routine?'. Then in case Carol now saw herself as a thrown over middle-aged mother, June always hastened to reassure her. 'You're still a young woman. There's plenty more fish in the sea darling.' Unless she ran into Brad Pitt at the takeaway, fish was not on the menu.

Well-meaning friends gave her pitying looks assuring her it would get better, stop hurting so much, she should get out more. Yesterday she'd overheard two of her work colleagues discussing her in the ladies room. She only caught the tail end of the conversation, but she got the general gist of it. Surely Carol should be getting over Martin by now. Like her fifteen year marriage was a nasty virus that she would recover from. Nice if you could just pop a pill and, shazam, all cured. Carol was heart sick even knowing they were right but, the thought of losing her workmates' respect added salt to the wound. She loved her job, had worked hard to get where she was.

She just didn't know how to move on. It seemed to be getting harder, not easier to get out of bed in the morning. If it wasn't for Lizzie she doubted she would bother. She glanced at her daughter's photo. 'Oh, Lizzie I'm letting you down.' Somewhere buried in the basement of her soul she had the cloth, she just couldn't fashion the garment that would turn her into super single-mum. The one her daughter deserved.

After barely a pause the phone rang again. She put the pillow over her head but she couldn't blot out the sound and

admitting defeat she swung her legs over the side of the bed and snatched up the offending instrument.

'Mum.' Lizzie sounded breathless, frightened.

Carol was wide awake now. 'What's up hon?'

'Oh, mummy, they're chasing me.'

'Who? Who's chasing you? Lizzie where are you?' Carol could hear her daughter's ragged breath and she yelled into the phone. 'Lizzie answer me. Where are you?'

The girl's reply was choked with tears. 'I'm in the park.'

'What're you doing there? Why aren't you at school?' She should be at school; supervised, safe. Carol clutched the edge of the table. Think – think what to do. She mustn't panic. If only Martin were here. She gave herself a mental shake. Martin, floundering in mid-life crisis couldn't even help himself. He'd traded her and Lizzie for a racing green sports car and a twenty year old bimbo. A teenage daughter was incontrovertible evidence of rapidly approaching middle-age.

Lizzie's high-pitched wail cut through the images fluttering bat-like through Carol's brain. 'Mummy, I'm scared.'

Think, Carol, think. Stay focussed. 'Baby, listen to me. Is there anyone who can help you? For pity's sake, it's the middle of the day there must be someone.'

'No. There's nobody here. No-one to help me.' Lizzie's voice quavered, and shuddering, Carol pictured her daughter's terrified face.

'They're sitting over by the fountain now, just watching me.'

Carol had seen them hanging around the park; knowing-eyed youths, insolent, answering to no one. Assault, rape,

murder, no, not her little girl. Please God let Lizzie be all right and I'll be the best single mother in the world.

'Mummy they're coming after me again.' Lizzie gave a little scream.

'Run, Lizzie, run.' This can't be happening. A sob escaped her. 'Run towards the road. Don't look back. Just run for your life.'

The last sound she heard was her daughter's laboured breath, and the thud as the phone hit the ground.

'Lizzie. Lizzie are you there? Please, please answer me.' Carol could hear raised voices and she thought she heard her daughter scream. She fought back a wave of nausea. Oh, God she mustn't faint. She recoiled in shock at the male voice. 'Hello Carol, it's Jeffrey Harrington.'

Relief turned her legs to jelly and she sagged against the wall. Tears clogged her voice. 'Jeff, thank God you're there. Have they gone? Did they hurt her?' She was struggling to get the words out. 'Let me speak to her, please.'

Jeff's voice was calm, reassuring and slightly puzzled. 'Carol I don't know what you thought was happening here, but Lizzie's fine. Those magpies have been swooping everyone who walks through the park. That's why I carry a weapon.' She heard the smile in his voice.

Clutching the phone to her chest Carol slid down the wall.

'Carol..... are you there?'

'Yes, I'm here.' She sucked in air, tried to steady her breath. 'Jeff, thank you so much for coming to her rescue.' No time now to explain that she was not an hysterical mother.

'No problems. I'll walk her home. See you soon. Here's Lizzie.'

'Hi Mum, Mr Harrington was wonderful. He chased them with his tennis racquet.'

'Elizabeth,' Carol spoke carefully. 'you had better pray that Mr Harrington stays for coffee. That will buy you some time.' She paused for effect. 'Because, you wretched child, you are at far greater risk of being harmed by me than you ever were by those birds.'

By the time she filled the kettle her heart had settled to a reasonably steady pace. Taking the phone into the bedroom she replaced it on the base and picked up Lizzie's photo and gave her a quick kiss. 'It's going to be okay love. We're going to be okay.' It suddenly occurred to her that Jeff Harrington would be here in a few minutes and she must look like the mother from hell.

Carol splashed water on her face. Not much to be done about the red eyes but a swipe of mascara and a bit of lipstick does wonders. She reached for her perfume and then thought better of it. Running a comb through her hair she twisted it into a loose knot and checked out her reflection. Hmm, not too bad for a middle-aged mum. She smiled as the front door slammed shut, one last thing to do before she went to embrace Lizzie, and thank Jeff for saving her little drama queen. Carol closed her eyes and offered up a prayer of thanks to whatever deity or saint has the unenviable task of looking after harassed mothers. As she turned away she swore she heard Grandma Molly chuckle. 'I never trusted that Martin, his eyes were way too close together. Time to move on my girl, no looking back now.'

ALTER

GLEN SKIEN



Above - **Glen Skien**, Artwork from *Alter*, 2009, collage and resin in tobacco tin

Below - **Glen Skien**, *The Europeans 1*, 2009, dry point etching and assemblage, 170 x 75cm

PERC TUCKER REGIONAL GALLERY 7 MAY UNTIL 15 AUGUST 2010

Alter is an exhibition of prints, collage and assemblage works by printmaker Glen Skien. These recent works explore the nature of experience and memory concealed within object, image and surface.



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Image: *Cafe DeWheels*, Jan Hynes, Mixed media letterbox, 18 x 26 x 20cm, 2009

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